# Module 3: Criteria for the Placement of Clients in Groups
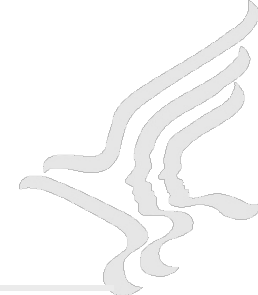
# Based on material in Chapter 3 of TIP 41, *Substance Abuse Treatment: Group Therapy*

# Module 3 Goal and Objectives

Goal:

Provide an overview of how to match clients with groups, depending on clients' readiness to change and their ethnic and cultural experiences.

Objectives:

- Match clients with substance abuse treatment groups.

- Assess clients' readiness to participate in group therapy.

- Determine clients' needs for specialized groups.

# Matching Clients With Groups
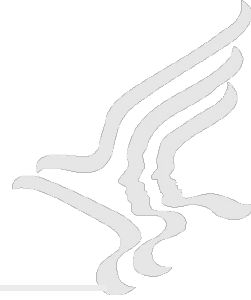
- The client's characteristics, needs, preferences, and stage of recovery

- The program's resources

- The nature of the group or groups available

- The client's ethnic and cultural experiences

# Assessing Client Readiness for Group
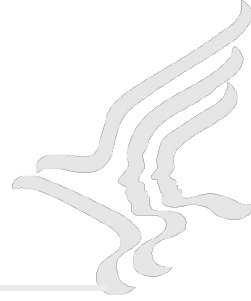
- Begin with a thorough assessment.

- Inquire about all drugs used, social networks, and experience with and roles in groups.

- Obtain additional information from observation, collateral resources, and other instruments.

- Pay attention to relationships at the current stage of recovery.

- Recognize when a client is not suited for a group approach or a particular group.

# Clients Who May Be Inappropriate for Group Therapy
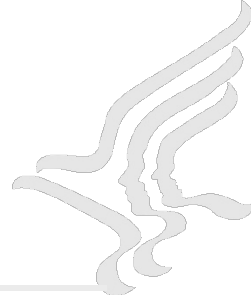
- Clients who refuse to participate

- Clients who cannot honor group agreements

- Clients who are unsuitable for group therapy

- Clients in the throes of a life crisis

- Clients who cannot control impulses

- Clients whose defenses would clash with the dynamics of the group

- Clients who experience severe internal discomfort in groups

# Primary Placement Considerations
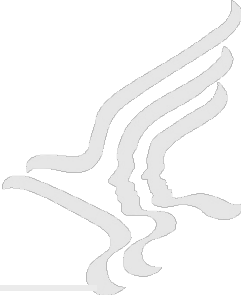
- Women

- Adolescents

- Level of interpersonal functioning

- Motivation to abstain

- Stage of recovery

- Expectation of success

# Diversity in a Broad Sense
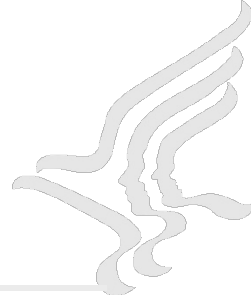
- Defined as differences that distinguish an individual from others and that affect how an individual identifies and how others identify him or her

- Includes age, gender, cultural background, sexual orientation, ability level, social class, education level, spiritual background, parental status, and justice system involvement

# Culturally Responsive Group Leaders
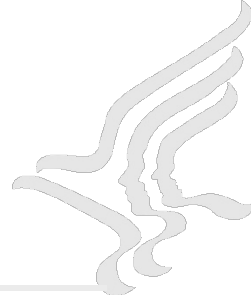
- Aware that cultural roles may conflict with treatment requirements.

- Anticipate a particular group's characteristics without automatically assigning them to all individuals in that group.

- Should be open and ready to learn all they can about their clients' cultures.

- Are conscious of how their backgrounds affect their ability to work with a particular population.

# Diversity and Placement
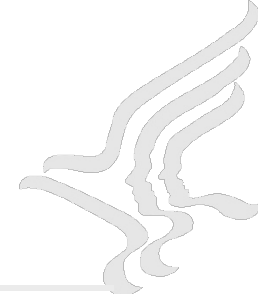
- Address the substance use problem in a manner that is congruent with the client's culture.

- Appreciate that particular cultures use substances at specified social occasions.

- Assess the behaviors and attitudes of current group members to determine whether a new client would match the group.

- Understand personal biases and prejudices about specific cultural groups.

# Four Processes That Occur Within Multiethnic Groups
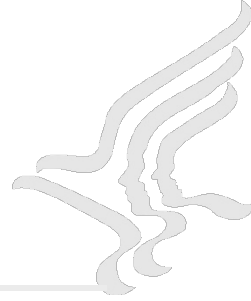
- Symbolism and nonverbal communication

- Cultural transference of traits from one person of a certain culture to another person of that culture

- Cultural countertransference, the leader's emotional reactions to a client

- Ethnic prejudice

# Preparing the Group for New Members
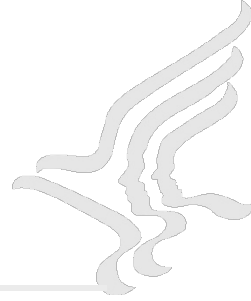
- Inform members in advance that people from a variety of racial and ethnic backgrounds will be in the group.

- Discuss the differences at appropriate times in a sensitive way to provide an atmosphere of openness and tolerance.

- Set the tone for an open discussion of differences in beliefs and feelings.

# Preparing the Group for New Members (cont.)
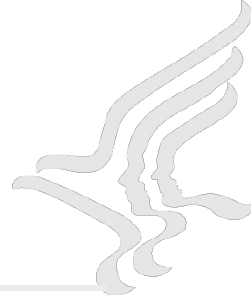
- Help clients adapt to and cope with prejudice in effective ways, while maintaining their self-esteem.

- Integrate new clients into the group slowly, letting them set their own pace.

- When new members start to make comments about others or to accept feedback, encourage more participation.

# Other Considerations for Practice
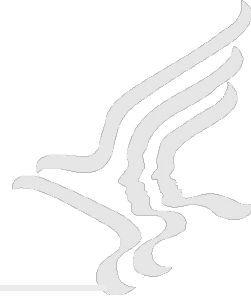
- Expectations of leaders

- Experience in decisionmaking and conflict resolution

- Understanding of gender roles, families, and community

- Values